



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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27 December 1985

Mr. Arnaud de Borchgrave  
Editor-in-Chief  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES  
3600 New York Avenue, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Arnaud:

J I appreciate your letter of 16 December and offer to discuss our recent problem with Bill Gertz. Lord knows, I too am sorry we are having problems with the TIMES because we certainly do not need any more enemies among the U.S. press.

A Bill Gertz just plain got it wrong. What I told him on the record was that the Agency received no letter from Attorney General William French Smith to DCI William Casey which stated that the Department of Justice intended to prosecute Mr. Waterman. I also told Gertz off the record that the DCI received a highly classified letter on 22 June from the Attorney General, but that it did not say what Gertz claimed it said, i.e., that the Justice Department planned to prosecute. I informed Gertz that the letter conveyed that Justice had no plans to prosecute, but declined to discuss any particulars since the letter contained classified information and belonged to the Department of Justice. I referred him to Justice for further information. I think I made it as plain as I could that Justice never told us it planned to prosecute Waterman; in fact, on 22 June it specifically stated that it had no plan to do so.

You should know that Gertz is the only journalist in Washington who consistently misrepresents what we tell him. We have arrived at a point where I have had to issue instructions that two of my media relations officers must be on the phone whenever any of us is talking to Gertz so that we will be able to confirm what was and what was not said to him. Indeed, two others can confirm my version of my conversation with Gertz. That we have had to go to these lengths to protect ourselves in dealing with this one person among all the journalists who call CIA should tell you all that needs to be said.

Mr. Arnaud de Borchgrave

2

27 December 1985

In the future, the best way for us to cope with Gertz is to not discuss anything with him by way of background and simply dictate a quote-end-quote statement answering his query. We will then ask him to read the statement back to us and will request that he run it exactly as we have dictated it. We do not have to do that with other reporters who correctly reproduce statements as a matter of journalistic practice. THE WASHINGTON POST at least quotes us accurately!

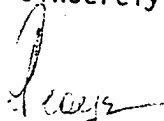
As to your sense that we are trying to discredit Gertz and get him off the intelligence beat: which journalists cover us is your business, not ours. Moreover, my office has had nothing to do with the Hale Foundation, whatever it is.

A cardinal rule here at CIA is that we never lie to reporters about anything. I have been in this miserable job for two and one-half years and I have always found ways of coping with the myriad of problems with which we have been faced without being dishonest or misleading. There is much we cannot say, but we try to be helpful when we can. All we ask in return is that what little we can say be reported accurately and not be misworded to advance a political cause or someone's personal vendetta by denigrating the Agency.

I would be delighted to lunch with you any time and indeed to discuss the foregoing if it is not clear.

Best wishes to you personally and to THE WASHINGTON TIMES.

Sincerely,



George V. Lauder  
Director, Public Affairs